



REPRESENTATIVE

RODNEY TOM

48TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

COMMITTEES:

Education, Assistant Ranking Republican
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**LEGISLATIVE
INFORMATION
ON THE INTERNET:**

www.leg.wa.gov

**STATE GOVERNMENT
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www.access.wa.gov



Dear friends,

We have a great opportunity in 2003. Yes, the looming budget deficit will make it difficult, but now is the time to make a real commitment to the children and families in Washington.

I believe we can set priorities and strive to make our schools and colleges the best in the nation, improve our transportation system and increase our state's economic health.

Achieving these goals and developing these solutions will take hard work and cooperation. Throughout the first few weeks of my time in Olympia, I have seen the possibility of open, honest cooperation. And I believe we owe it to the people of Washington to continue on this path.

Call me using the toll-free legislative hotline, send e-mails, write letters, or stop in for a visit if you are in the Olympia area. My door is always open to the residents of the 48th District.

Thank you,

Rep. Rodney Tom

*P.S. As I have just joined the Legislature, this is the first opportunity I have had to communicate with many of you. You can help me become aware of your concerns by reading this report on the issues affecting our area and state, and sharing your answers to the questions inside. Please send me your feedback by visiting my website at hrc.leg.wa.gov/tom.htm
Thanks again, Rodney*

ABOUT THIS LETTER...

Letters like this help me reach your household and others with information about issues we face in Olympia. You can expect to see a few more letters over the next two years to help me keep you up-to-date on the Washington State Legislature. But I would prefer to correspond more directly with you. Send me your e-mail address so I can regularly inform you about things happening at the Capitol.

REPRESENTATIVE RODNEY TOM

EDUCATION: OUR PARAMOUNT DUTY

There should be no question about the priority of state government. We have the duty – the paramount duty – to provide educational opportunities for our children. The founders of Washington were clear in establishing this responsibility. Today's lawmakers have no excuse for failure.

KEEPING THEM IN THE CLASSROOM

I am proud to co-sponsor House Bill 1082, which would allow school districts to provide housing allowances for teachers in high-cost areas such as the Eastside. If approved, this legislation would help our local school districts keep our high-quality teachers in our classrooms. All three school superintendents in our local area support this bill.

In Bellevue alone, 56% of the teachers leave the district by the end of their 5th year. We can't afford this kind of turnover and expect the quality education our children deserve.

We are fortunate to live in a community that shows strong support for its schools. We have built a base upon which to expand educational excellence in our communities. Unfortunately, we were not allowed to vote on this bill before the first legislative cutoff. I will work with my colleagues in Olympia to bring this issue to the table as part of budget negotiations.

50 PERCENT PLUS ONE

The supermajority is simply outdated formula, a holdover from the 1940s and low homeownership rates. Today, close to 67 percent of Washington's citizens own their own home.

House Joint Resolution 4204 would amend the Washington State Constitution to provide for a simple majority vote to authorize a school levy. The supermajority for school levies (the 60 percent requirement) puts an undue burden on school districts, and makes education take a backseat to less important projects.

As the assistant ranking Republican on the House Education Committee, I believe we can and must do more to provide opportunities for teachers to teach and children to learn. **This bill resolution passed the House and is now before the Senate.**

It's difficult for me to explain to my daughter that it took only a majority of the people to build a football stadium, but it takes 60 percent to help the local communities fund education. Even a second-grader realizes we have those priorities backwards in Olympia.

SOLUTIONS FOR OUR CITIZENS

Trust in government is at an all-time low. I want to take every opportunity to break down the walls of bureaucracy and reach out to Washington's citizens. Let's work toward open, honest communication and solve the problems we face as a state together.

The answer is not more government. It's important to remember government must be a partner, not adversary, with employers who grow our economy and provide jobs and income for our citizens.

THE BUDGET 101

At last count, we're facing a \$2.4 billion budget shortfall. The magnitude of the budget deficit may lead to cuts – and that will mean hard choices. As leaders, we must focus on creating jobs and improving Washington's business climate, not increasing government.

Republicans have a long-term solution that begins with a critical first step: Before we ask citizens for more money, we're going to insist that government earn their trust. Repairing the relationship between government and the people is essential to addressing the important issues facing our communities – things like transportation and education.



TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Already, the House of Representatives has taken the first step in getting this state moving again. As of this writing, House Bills 1121 and 1122 have passed the House and are awaiting action in the Senate.

House members worked together to craft these bills that will put the decision-making authority back in the hands of elected officials. They also require performance audits of the Department of Transportation. We need accountability to make sure our state's transportation dollars are spent effectively.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Please take the time to complete the enclosed survey and return it to the address below. Thank you in advance for your input. We hope to hear from you soon and in the months ahead.

Please complete the following survey and return by mail to: Rep. Rodney Tom, 441 John L. O'Brien Building, P.O. Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504-0600.

You may also complete this survey on-line by sending an e-mail to: tom_ro@leg.wa.gov

■ It's estimated that the state is facing a \$2.4 billion deficit simply to continue the services we are currently providing. How should the Legislature deal with the deficit?

- _____ Cut public services, don't raise taxes (please specify what areas where spending could be cut)
- _____ Raise taxes, don't cut public services
- _____ Rely mostly on cuts with modest tax increases
- _____ Rely mostly on tax increases with modest cuts in services
- _____ Other _____

■ What is the number-one transportation problem you face on a daily basis?

- _____ Traffic congestion
- _____ Poorly maintained roads
- _____ Unsafe roads
- _____ Inadequate public transit
- _____ Other

■ Please rank these transportation solutions in order of importance to you (1 most important, 4 least important)

- _____ More roads and traffic lanes
- _____ More mass transit to reduce traffic on the roads we have
- _____ Maintain roads better
- _____ Pedestrian and bike paths
- _____ Other

■ How much more tax on gas (per gallon), if any, would you pay to fund new transportation construction dedicated to specific congestion relief projects, such as I-405?

- _____ 0 cents
 _____ 1-5 cents
 _____ 6-10 cents
 _____ 11-15 cents

■ Would you like more information?

If you would like periodic updates on issues that you've indicated are important to you, please provide information below.

Name _____

Address _____

and/or E-Mail _____

COMMENTS:

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REPRESENTATIVE
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REPRESENTATIVE **RODNEY TOM**

PROTECTING OUR LOCAL INVESTMENTS

Citizens in the area have shared with me their concerns regarding the Bridle Trails State Park, but progress is being made. We are all justifiably worried once we agree to make a private investment to keep the park open, that the state will go ahead and decide it's not enough to keep it open.

The fate of Bridle Trails has yet to be decided. I will do my best to let you know what is happening with the park and offer solutions that will allow us to keep it open. I'm confident an agreement will be finalized by the end of the session.



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THE LEGISLATURE 2003:
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